



HB5400: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MICHIGAN'S FUTURE

REMARKS TO THE MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAREER PREPARATION COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 28, 2006

RUTH HOHL BORGER VICE PRESIDENT FOR COLLEGE ADVANCEMENT

Good afternoon and thank you for this invitation to speak with you today. I am Ruth Borger, Vice President for College Advancement at Lansing Community College where we serve over 19,000 students enrolled in 200 degree and certificate programs every semester.

I am here today to voice support for House Bill 5400 and to ask that you lend your vote and your voice to this innovative opportunity for Michigan residents and their communities.

Lansing Community College, like its 27 sister institutions, is a place of hope and opportunity. For decades, LCC has helped thousands of residents realize their dream of a better future for themselves, their families and their communities. With affordable tuition, highly qualified and dedicated faculty, personalized instruction, and an understanding of the educational needs of a community, LCC keeps opportunity within everyone's reach.

Everyone within our community college district that is.

Over the last few years, we have reluctantly raised tuition to out of district students and scrutinized what we can actually offer at our extension centers because of budget limitations. We are concerned about these rising tuition costs.

LCC's tuition is the most affordable among the postsecondary institutions most often chosen by students in the tri-county area of Ingham, Eaton and Clinton Counties. Nearly all LCC graduates agree that costs at the College are reasonable. LCC also continues to be one of the lowest among community colleges in the combined cost of tuition and fees.

Yet, out of district tuition rates are projected to increase just when we are asked to provide more and more services out of the existing community college district.

House Bill 5400 is an opportunity to make the local community college more affordable, more accessible and more responsive to more Michigan residents without adding pressure to State fiscal resources.

Community colleges have a special mission of service and partnership that is rooted in our community. We need to redefine, reemphasize and recommit to a new definition of “engagement” with our community. That sense of community is neither defined nor limited to our geographic boundaries and often spans across the formal district lines.

That is where HB 5400 can make a difference.

Over the years there have been changes in funding and changes in student populations. We work with changing expectations and obligations. But some things are constant and that is the promise and potential that community colleges hold for students, the State and our collective prosperity.

Lansing Community College plays a leadership role in moving our mid-Michigan region forward educationally, economically, and culturally. We have always been a key partner in the community’s educational systems and workforce development networks. Today, we have the potential of leading efforts to advance our region and improve our residents’ quality of life in new, innovative and creative ways.

House Bill 5400 is about reorganizing community college districts to better serve Michigan residents and increase the number of students attending college, earning degrees and securing high wage careers and in turn creating a strong, prosperous community for all.

The geographical boundaries that define our districts are fading away. Instead, economic boundaries of expanding regions are determining what services and programs we offer.

LCC’s district is comprised of 15 school districts across most of Ingham and parts of Clinton and Eaton Counties. Yet we serve three additional counties that are not currently part of any community college district: Shiawassee, Ionia, and Livingston. As you know, Livingston County is the largest growing county in our state. We have extension centers in St. Johns in Clinton County and Howell in Livingston County that continue to grow even with increased tuition and limited offerings.

Nearly one third of all LCC students are out of district students paying \$40 more in tuition per billing hour. Our regional community has grown and expanded since LCC’s founding in 1957. To truly be the Capitol region’s community college and provide the services that the entire community benefits from, residents deserve

an opportunity to choose to be part of the greater community and choose to be in a community college district.

House Bill 5400 supports that choice.

Today's classroom is not limited by four walls. Instead, some LCC students never set foot in an LCC classroom, instead opting to complete their program through on-line classes. The LCC Virtual College is one of the fastest growing online learning programs in the state. The number of enrollments through the Virtual College in Spring 2006 represented 12.6% of total credits compared with only 1.6% of the total enrollments in Fall 1999.

Michigan's quality of life will depend on our ability to remain competitive. The foundation of America's competitiveness is a well-educated and skilled workforce. Higher education has always been a fundamental part of achieving the American dream.

If we can increase access to and affordability of higher education, we dramatically increase Michigan's potential to retain and attract new economy employers and entrepreneurs. Community colleges are a critical component of that vision.

The Cherry Commission reported that those states with a higher educated workforce have a stronger economy. Some startling facts:

- 37 percent of Michigan 18-24 year olds are enrolled in higher education, a percentage well behind leading states that enroll up to 48 percent
- Only 4.1 percent of Michigan residents over 25 participate in higher education compared to leading states where 6.5 percent participate
- Much of rural Michigan has no community college service and consequently has lower higher education attainment rates.

In your binder are maps of Michigan's community college districts and two states with complete community college service: North Carolina and Illinois. This access is an economic advantage to these States.

We have some ambitious goals in our State. Governor Granholm gave the Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth a daunting charge – to find ways to double the number of Michigan residents who obtain college degrees and other valuable credentials within the next ten years.

The Cherry Commission was charged to make policy recommendations to meet three goals:

- Double the percentage of residents who attain postsecondary degree or other credential that links them to success in Michigan's economy
- Improve the alignment of Michigan's institutions of higher education with emerging employment opportunities in the state's economy, and
- Build a dynamic workforce of employment who have the talents and skills needed for success in the 21st century.

Increasing access and affordability for a community college degree is essential to achieving that goal.

HB 5400 is one step in that direction.

Ask any parent of an elementary student if their child is going to college and nearly 100 percent will say yes. Yet, Michigan's high school graduates trail behind the nation in postsecondary educational attainment. Unless something changes only 41 percent of today's ninth graders will enroll in college directly out of high school.

We believe this legislation will help in changing these statistics.

Each year of college attainment enables an individual to increase annual earnings by an average of 10 percent. More importantly, there is a strong correlation between the education level of a state's workforce and its economic vitality. The following is from the Cherry Commission report:

States that educate and nurture creative talent – and that build and maintain the necessary K-12 and postsecondary education systems – keep and attract people and investment and can capitalize on the multiplier effects that create new companies and jobs. Recent research shows that a 5 percent increase in the share of college-educated adults would boost overall economic growth by 2.5 percent over ten years, and the real wages of all Michigan residents by 5.5 percent.

Simply put, those States with a higher percentage of the population 25 to 34 with a college degree lead the nation in per capita personal income. Michigan lags behind the national average in the percentage of adults aged 25 and older with any kind of college degree. Leading states have 40 percent or more of adults with an associates degree or higher, while Michigan's percentage rate is only 29 percent.

Community colleges are critical partners with the state and our communities in creating the new economy that this State needs.

HB 5400 provides a way for future-focused communities to invest in themselves, build their local economy and buy into a community college district. The benefits are reduced tuition, increased services, and a student centered, responsive, relevant educational resource that returns valuable benefits to the community.

The role of government is not to create wealth but to create an environment where individuals can pursue and realize wealth. Creating an environment that increases access to community colleges is a positive economic development initiative. That is what HB 5400 does.

In this “flattened world”, innovation and competitiveness are what will keep America at the forefront as the world’s economic engine. Community colleges, with their reputation for responsiveness, flexibility and all inclusive openness to anyone wanting to pursue a dream are one of the best vehicles to invest in.

As geographical boundaries are less important with the rise of technological delivery of higher education, expanding the boundaries of existing community college districts – by a vote of all those living in the newly organized district—is a way to increase access, keep a community college education affordable, encourage regionalism and encourage more Michigan residents to complete a higher degree and continue on as life long learners.

This philosophy permeates federal, state and local economic policy. The following is from *The American Competitiveness Initiative* prepared by the Domestic Policy Council of the Office of Science and Technology Policy:

One of the hallmarks of a strong economy is labor market flexibility. When workers can move relatively freely from job to job and place to place following the rhythms of the marketplace, businesses have the workers they need to do the job and workers have the opportunities for career advancement. Community colleges, as flexible training providers, help make the U.S. workforce and the U.S. economy more competitive.

In conclusion, every day, the faculty and staff at LCC renews a promise to our communities to provide education, enrichment and economic development opportunities. It is a message of service and a commitment to move Michigan forward one student at a time.

As we look to the future, LCC wants to ensure that opportunities exist for generations to come. Leaders at LCC are especially concerned with maintaining the relevance of our institution, reasserting its value and contributions to society, and improving our ability to change. That requires a vision that embraces the promise and potential of our region – an expanded region -- with a vibrant economy and a highly educated workforce; one with an ambitious agenda and a

unified intention to realize the goal. Once that promise is renewed, the potential is limitless.

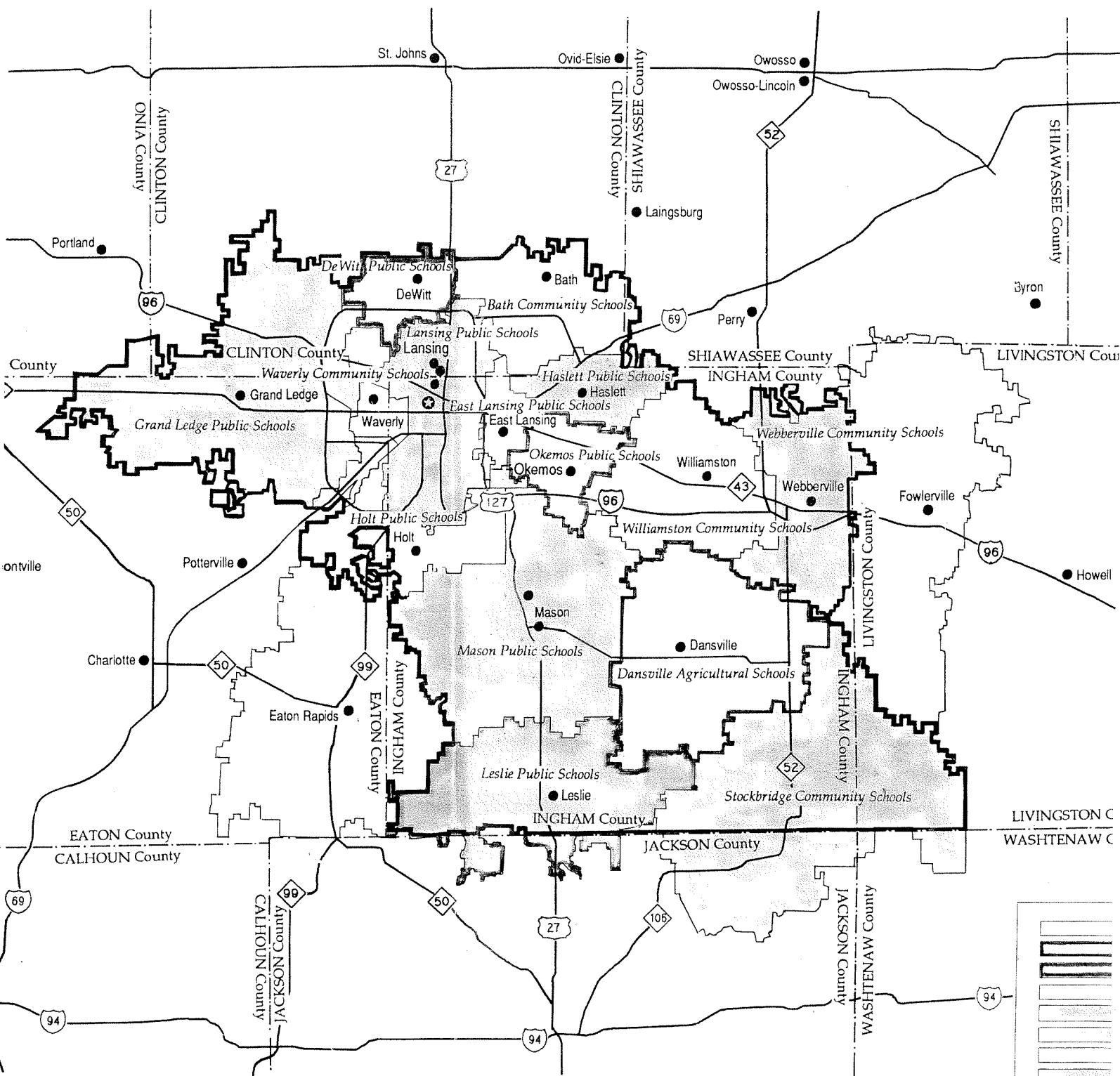
HB 5400 is a part of that vision and a vehicle to renew the promise of a prosperous quality of life that higher education can deliver.

Thank you for sponsoring HB 5400 and stewarding it to this hearing. We urge you to continue to advocate for its passage. Thank you.

Ruth Hohl Borger
Vice President for College Advancement
8100 President's Office
Lansing Community College
PO Box 40010
Lansing, MI 48901

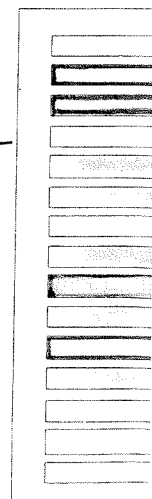
517.483.1869 phone
517.483.1854 fax
517.582.0375 cell
borgerr@lcc.edu

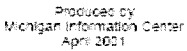
LCC SCHOOL DISTRICT MAP



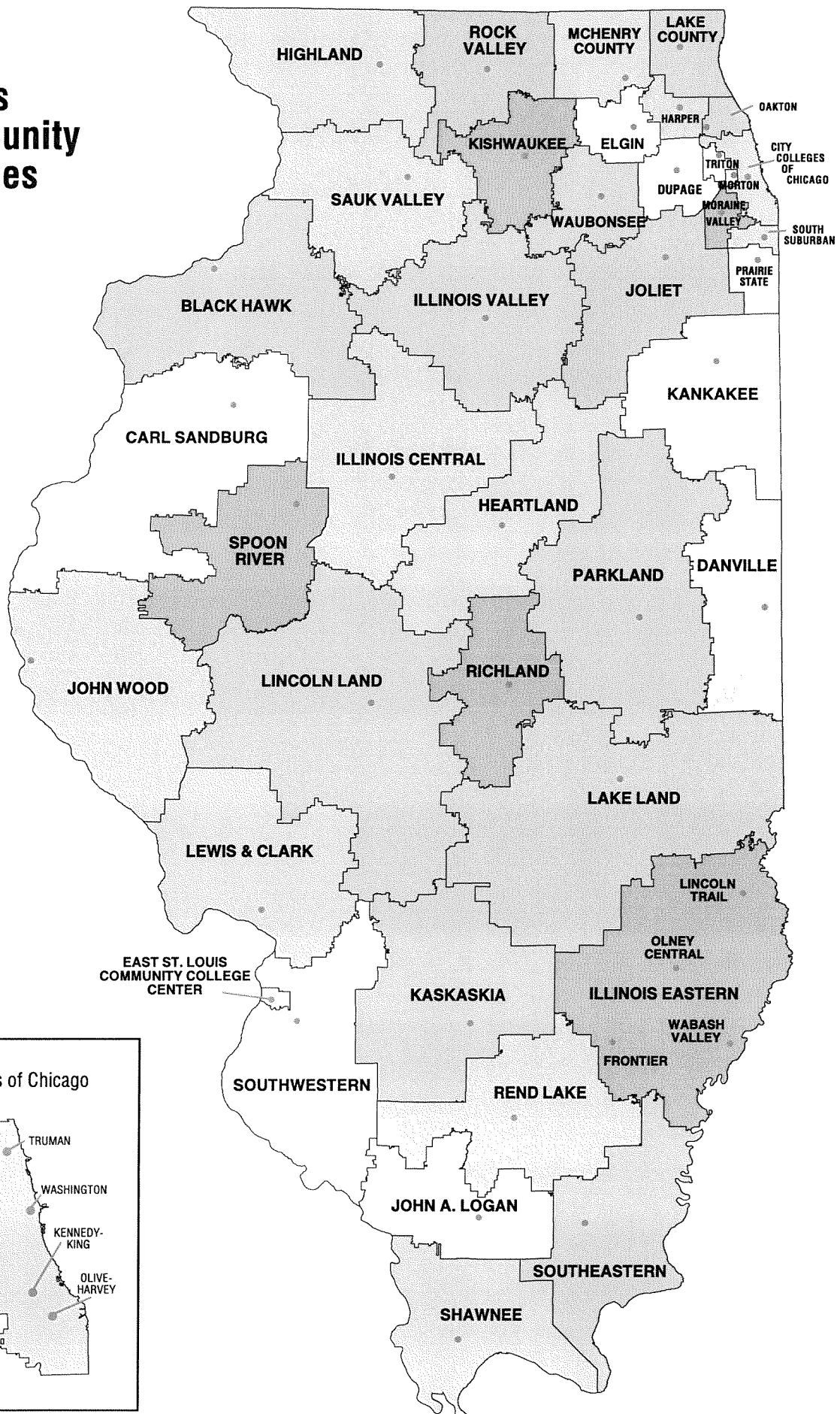
Legends

	Lansing Community College
	LCC School District Boundary Line
	School District Boundary Line
	County Boundary Line
	LCC Learning Center

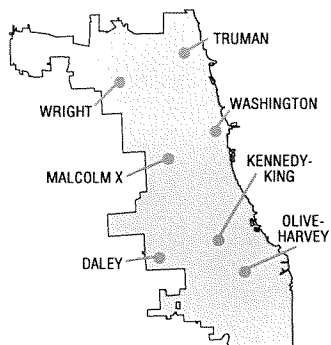




Illinois Community Colleges

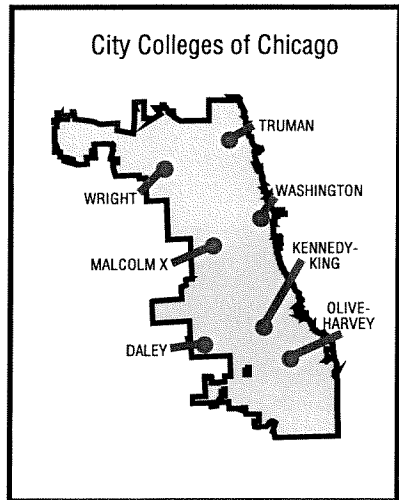
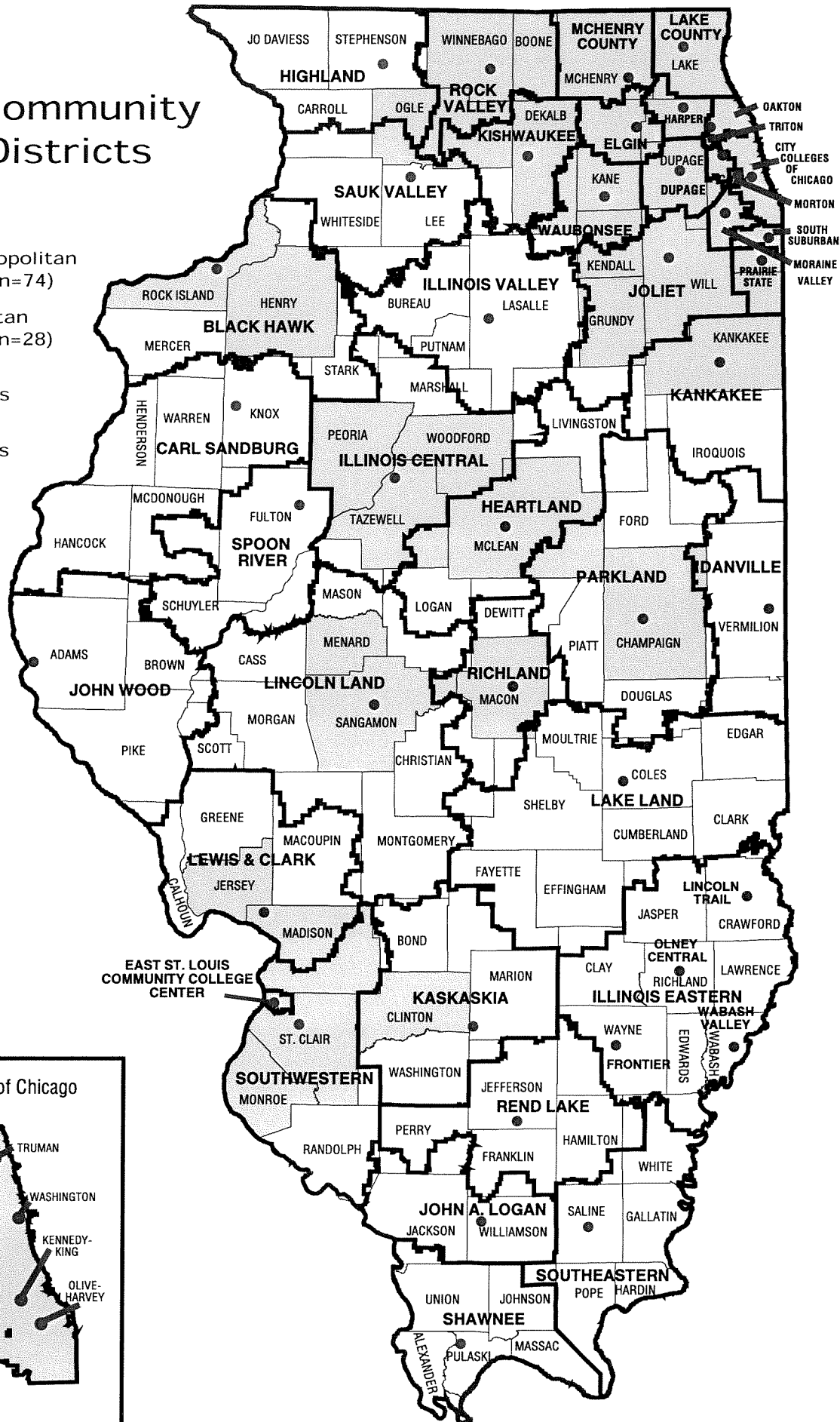


City Colleges of Chicago



Illinois Community College Districts

- Non-Metropolitan Counties (n=74)
- Metropolitan Counties (n=28)
- District Boundaries
- County Boundaries

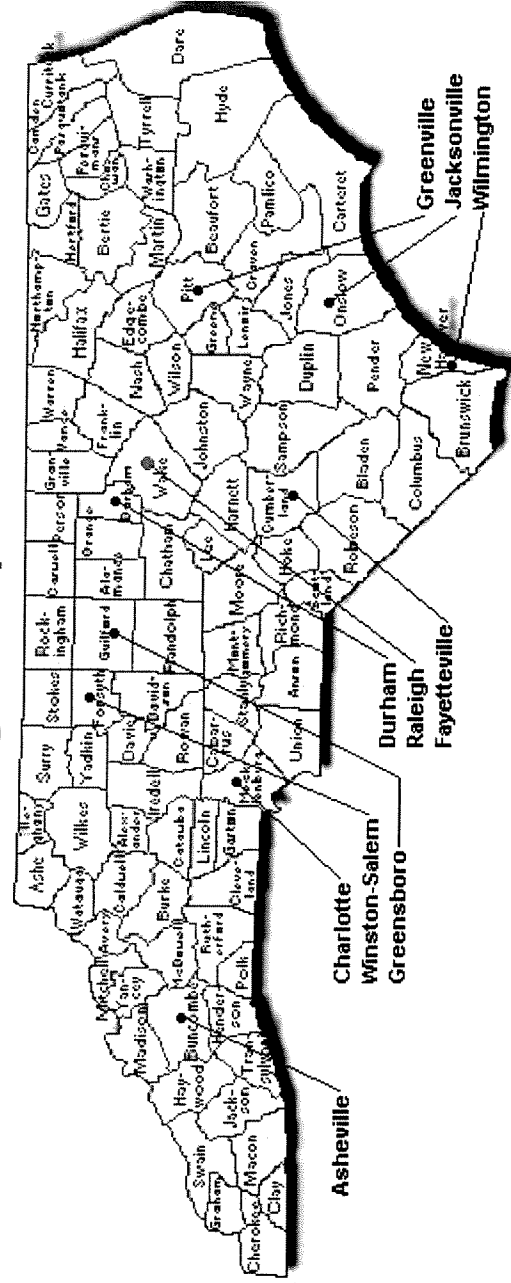




North Carolina Community College System

Preparing North Carolina's World-Class Workforce

Colleges/Map



North Carolina has 58 comprehensive community colleges and one specialized technology center. The system serves all 100 counties. Individual colleges have service areas that may include one or several counties. Students may, however, apply to institutions of their choice, regardless of their counties of residence.